



**GORGE
GROWN**
FOOD NETWORK

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IMPACT REPORT

2023

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to build an inclusive, resilient regional food system that improves the health and well-being of our community.

OUR VISION

We envision a healthy, self-sufficient, vibrant Columbia River Gorge where our food is produced with integrity and is valued, abundant, and accessible to all.

OUR VALUES

Collaboration · Integrity · Inclusivity
Innovation · Justice





OUR WORK

Our work seeks to impact three key areas in order to build an inclusive, resilient regional food system.

BUILD THE SUPPLY OF LOCAL FOOD

We must grow enough food locally with environmental and social integrity to meet regional demand. We work to ensure that local farmers have access to land, equipment, infrastructure, financing, education, and support they need.

INCREASE ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD FOR EVERYONE

Local food should be available and accessible to all. We work to bring affordable local food to *everyone* in our community.

MOBILIZE A THRIVING LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT

A regional food system requires leadership, partnership, and advocacy. We convene leaders and advance policies that support inclusive food systems, including land access, tribal food sovereignty, and regenerative farming practices.

KEY MILESTONES IN 2023



Photo From Paloma Ayalya.

LOCAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION: We sourced \$9,000 of nutritious food for the food pantry at The Annex, a transitional housing facility in The Dalles.



FOOD SECURITY COALITION: Supported 28 gatherings that helped advance food security and justice. 765 people attended.



FOOD SECURITY COALITION: Convened 12 Healthy Ag. Working Group meetings involving 9 organizations to mitigate harm caused by chemicals used in agriculture.



CROP TALKS: We hosted 6 peer-to-peer farmer training Crop Talks in partnership with Underwood Conservation District & Oregon State University.



GORGE GLEANING: 139 volunteers helped harvest over 9,800 pounds of fresh produce that would have gone to waste.



Photo From Paloma Ayalya.

FARMERS MARKETS: 81% of vendor businesses are owned or co-owned by women.



Photo From Paloma Ayalya.

FARMERS MARKETS: Our markets supported more than 100 family farmers, food producers and small businesses.



MOBILE FARMERS MARKET: We worked with 28 local farmers to bring local produce to 6 rural communities in the Gorge.



Photo From Paloma Ayalya.

MOBILE FARMERS MARKET: 20% of sales came from programs like SNAP (formerly food stamps), WIC, or Veggie Rx.



Photo From Paloma Ayalya.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

VEGGIE RX In 2023, we provided 218 individuals in our community with fresh local produce through Veggie Rx.

1 in 3 people in the Columbia River Gorge worry about where their next meal will come from. Our award-winning Veggie Rx program seeks to address hunger by enabling healthcare providers to prescribe food insecure patients with fresh, locally grown produce. Since the program began in 2014, over \$430,000 has gone directly to local farmers for Veggie Rx Produce.



**“This summer I have eaten the best I ever have in my life.”
- Veggie Rx Recipient**

SNAP MATCH & DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS

Heading into the 2023 farmers market season, federal nutrition assistance benefits were the lowest they've been in three years while food prices hit record highs. The need to fill in the gaps left by insufficient government assistance became even more essential to keep food-insecure households fed.

In 2023, we piloted a new SNAP Match program at Hood River Farmers Market that was a triple win:

- 1) families bring home more fruits and veggies**
- 2) local farmers get a financial boost**
- 3) our local economy thrives.**

Through this program, Gorge Grown harnessed \$80,000 in state and federal funds and local business sponsorships to go straight to local families in need. As a result, demand for the SNAP program increased 95% from 2022 and we served more than 300 customers using SNAP at the market.

SNAP, SNAP Match and Double Up Food Bucks Distribution at Hood River Farmers Market

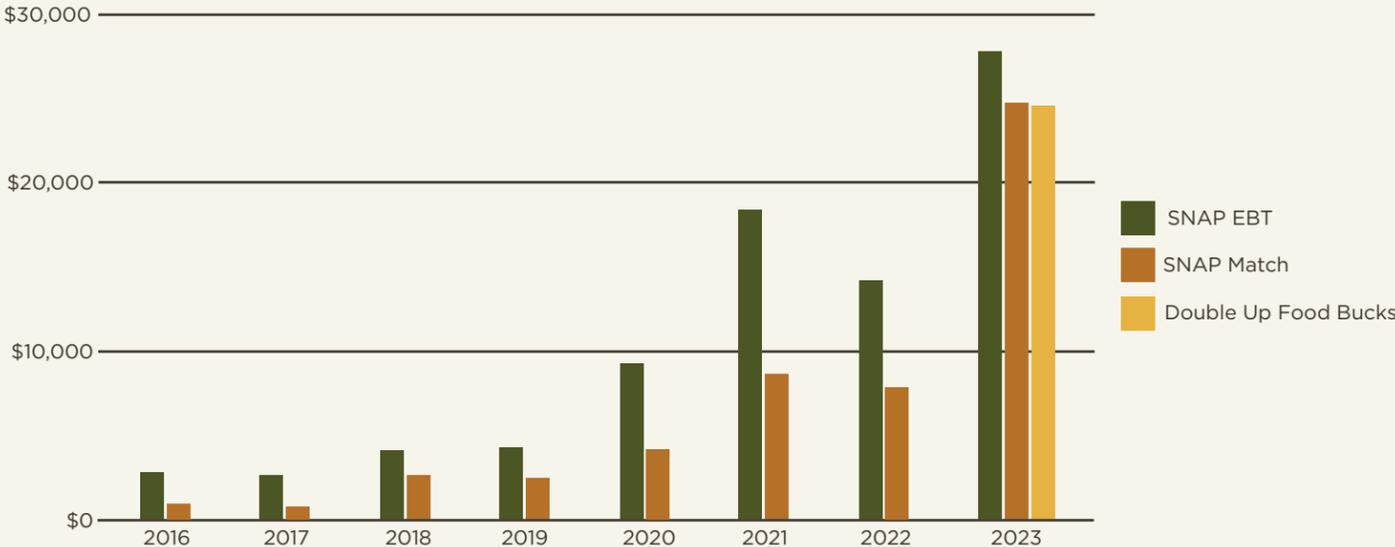


Photo From Paloma Ayalya

“The program allows me to buy veggies that I’m proud to cook!”

- Hood River Farmers Market Shopper

TRIBAL FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Beginning in late 2022, we partnered with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) to provide monthly food deliveries to In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites throughout the Columbia Gorge. In that time, we've distributed 36,400 lbs of fresh food. For these distributions, we've purchased food from local producers and received donations from Organically Grown Company.



A collaborative approach:

The Columbia Gorge Food Security Coalition is a cross-sector network of over 50 organizations and individuals working together to strengthen the local food system. Gorge Grown Food Network, nominated to serve as the Coalition's Coordinating Agency, houses the Coalition staff and provides facilitation, project support, grant management, fundraising and accounting.

The Coalition's Tribal Food Sovereignty group is working to advance land access for the gathering of first foods. They explore complex topics such as indigenous fire stewardship, biopiracy, historical trauma and salmon fisheries. This group includes enrolled members of 6 tribes including the Cayuse/ Umatilla, Nez Perce, Warm Springs and Yakama Nation.



**"The salmon is sacred to our people. We have been in the Gorge since time immemorial so it has a special meaning."
- Buck Jones**

Buck Jones is a Gorge Grown Board Member and the Co-Chair of the Tribal Food Sovereignty Committee.

We commit to creating a just, equitable local food system based on solidarity and dignity. We acknowledge that the current food system is built and dependent upon the oppression of historically excluded communities. We will confront the systemic injustices that create and perpetuate poverty and hunger.

- Columbia Gorge Food Security Coalition Equity Statement

Our mission is to build an inclusive,
resilient regional food system that
improves the health and well-being
of our community.

Support our work
www.gorgegrown.com



**GORGE
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